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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY,

IN

WORCESTER, OCTOBER 23, 1854.

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BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,

22, SCHOOL STREET.

1854.



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*Edw. -  
American Antiquarian Society,  
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## PROCEEDINGS.

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ANNUAL MEETING, OCTOBER 23, 1854,

AT

ANTIQUARIAN HALL IN WORCESTER.

---

HON. STEPHEN SALISBURY, Vice-President, in the chair.

The Secretary read the proceedings of the Society at its semi-annual meeting in Boston.

The President read the Report of the Council to the Society.

The Librarian read his Report.

The President read the Report of the Treasurer.

*Voted*, That the Report of the Council be accepted, and referred, with the Reports of the Librarian and Treasurer, to the Committee of Publication, with instructions to publish such parts of them as they may think proper.

*Voted*, That the papers read at informal meetings of the Society be referred to the same Committee, with the same instructions.

*Voted*, That the same Committee be requested to print a list of the present and past members of the Society, with such remarks and information in relation to deceased members as they may think proper.

*Voted* to proceed to the election of officers of the Society for the ensuing year.

*Voted* to appoint by the Chair a Committee of Nomination. The Chair appointed Dr. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, Hon. Benjamin F. Thomas, and Samuel F. Haven, Esq., who reported, after consultation, the following list of officers:—

*President.*

HON. STEPHEN SALISBURY . . . . . WORCESTER.

*Vice-Presidents.*

REV. WILLIAM JENKS, D.D. . . . . BOSTON.

HON. LEVI LINCOLN, LL.D. . . . . WORCESTER.

*Council.*

HIS EXCELLENCY EMORY WASHBURN, LL.D. . . . . WORCESTER.

JOHN GREEN, M.D. . . . . WORCESTER.

HON. ISAAC DAVIS, LL.D. . . . . WORCESTER.

GEORGE LIVERMORE, ESQ. . . . . CAMBRIDGE.

NATHANIEL B. SHURTLEFF, M.D. . . . . BOSTON.

CHARLES FOLSOM, ESQ. . . . . CAMBRIDGE.

HON. IRA M. BARTON . . . . . WORCESTER.

HON. THOMAS KINNICUTT . . . . . WORCESTER.

HON. PLINY MERRICK, LL.D. . . . . WORCESTER.

HON. JOHN P. BIGELOW . . . . . BOSTON.

*Secretary of Foreign Correspondence.*

JARED SPARKS, LL.D. . . . . CAMBRIDGE.

*Secretary of Domestic Correspondence.*

HON. BENJAMIN F. THOMAS, LL.D. . . . . WORCESTER.

*Recording Secretary.*

REV. EDWARD E. HALE . . . . . WORCESTER.

*Treasurer.*

SAMUEL JENNISON, ESQ. . . . . WORCESTER.

*Committee of Publication.*

SAMUEL F. HAVEN, ESQ. . . . . WORCESTER.

REV. EDWARD E. HALE . . . . . WORCESTER.

GEORGE LIVERMORE, ESQ. . . . . CAMBRIDGE.

The Society proceeded to ballot for officers, and all the persons here named were unanimously elected.

Hon. Rejoice Newton had intimated his wish to retire from the post of Recording Secretary.

On motion of Hon. Ira M. Barton, the thanks of the Society were presented to him for his long continued services, of which the Society has had the benefit for a period as extended as thirty-nine years.

*Voted* to proceed to the election of members ; —

HON. NATHAN APPLETON . . . . .	Boston,
HON. OLIVER B. MORRIS . . . . .	Springfield,
PROF. CORNELIUS C. FELTON . . . . .	Cambridge,

having been nominated in the Council, and by the Council recommended to the Society, were unanimously elected.

*Voted* to dissolve the meeting.

Attest,

EDWARD E. HALE,

*Recording Secretary.*



## REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

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ON this forty-second anniversary, the Council presents the stated report of the affairs and interests of the Society. As on some former occasions, and after the frequent example of other associations for literature and science, the first inclination is to use the language of apology and deprecation. While this may be prompted by a consciousness of falling short of the full measure of duty, and by the disproportion of the visible product that is brought into the garner to the plenteousness of the harvest, the disposition will be confirmed by the outside pressure of common opinion, which contrasts the quietness of intellectual labor with the showy bustle of the prominent pursuits of ordinary life, and expects, from Antiquarian scholars especially, no better service than to take note of the progress which they do not promote. It is not strange that the value of study, and its connection with material utility, is not understood, when the wit of man is able to discern so little of the origin and growth of his most cherished conceptions. When

Minerva, full armed, comes forth from the brow of Jove, her worshippers know nothing of the heavy blows which the brain must have suffered before the birth was effected. The greatest philosophers and statesmen, not less than the poets, have been disposed to consider their best thoughts as the gift —

“Of *the* celestial patroness, who deigns  
Her nightly visitation unimplored,  
And dictates to *them* slumbering, or inspires  
Easy *the* unpremeditated verse.”

And the necessary existence of such a control of the thoughts, out of which are the issues of life, will be admitted by all who believe —

“There 's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them how we will.”

Yet it is found in many instances, and may be suspected in more, that what was supposed to be inspiration, or the exercise of creative power, is merely the development or new combination of some suggested idea, the source of which is unknown. Historical research will resort to an extended library, as to a chart of the movements and discoveries of the human mind, which gives all the vantage-ground of the experience of the past, while it may save from the folly and mischief of travelling backwards and wandering in a circle, which has marked the progress of man in the sciences, and especially in his attempts to explore

the unseen and spiritual. On your own shelves **may** be found, covered with the rust of age and neglect, the chrysalis form of the most recent vagaries **that** have fluttered before the world, to improve or supersede divine revelation.

The pleasant accommodations of the new Hall have been used by more frequent visits, not only of your members, but of persons from every walk of life, who have come to consult the silent responses of your Library, or to profit by the courteous and ready intelligence of your Librarian. Here, as in time past, professed scholars, engaged in systematic researches, have met those who turn aside for an hour from the productive thrift of material industry, to gain a knowledge of the actual improvements and capabilities of their own business, or to enlarge their power to influence the minds of their fellow-men. This open freedom has always characterized the administration of this Society, and is worthy of its origin, and of the large views of its founder, who built up his own strong mind amid the labors of mechanic art, made himself one of the guiding spirits of his own time, and gained an honored memory, kept fresh by perpetual gratitude for this enduring provision for the benefit of his country.

The Report of the Librarian, Samuel F. Haven, Esq., to the Council, is herewith presented, and need not be commended to the attention of the Society. The number of the accessions to the Library is large,

and many of the books are rare and much desired for historical research. The descriptive notices, given by Mr. Haven, set forth the value of the new acquisitions, and contain important suggestions for increasing the usefulness of the Library. The additions to the Society's Collection of the Colonial and Provincial Legislative Documents of Massachusetts are very welcome, as they supply deficiencies in a department already valuable, which has been kept in view and been enlarged from time to time; and it is hoped that recent arrangements, chiefly through the efforts of your Librarian, will soon render this important collection as perfect as any that can exist at this day.

The number of the bound printed volumes in the Library exceeds twenty-three thousand; and in the spacious lower hall there is a large collection of imperfectly bound volumes, pamphlets, and newspapers, not now in a situation to be conveniently used, among which there may be found as much value as in the best part of the Library. The accumulation of this mass has been in part occasioned by the difficulty of arrangement in the inconvenient and crowded rooms of the old building in which it was deposited, and by the imperfect state of some works which are thus kept until they can be made complete. Some progress has been made in the arrangement of this collection; and the early attention of the Council will be required to put the whole in order, and to

cause the completed volumes to be bound, and placed on the shelves of the Library.

The incident of the year, which most seriously affects the interests of this Society, will occupy your thoughts at this hour. The symbol of mourning which hangs over the chair of your presiding officer, and the draped pedestal of the bust of Hon. John Davis in the Library, are solemn witnesses of the affectionate regard, the high respect, and the sense of loss, to which the proceedings of the last semi-annual meeting of the Society gave such appropriate and eloquent expression. The removal of your late President was a grief to many good men, and a privation to many good objects; and to none is it more truly a cause of lamentation than to this Society devoted to the furtherance of historic truth. He was eminently qualified to preside over your affairs, not only by his interest in your objects and researches, but more by the peculiar characteristic of his mind. For he was one who always desired to look at things as they were; and the element of his intellectual strength and of his success in life was not the abundance and variety of his mental resources, — though he was well furnished and equal to the occasions that awaited him, — but rather his evident search for truth, and his plain and persuasive utterance of his own convictions.

In compliance with a vote passed by the Society, at its last semi-annual meeting, a portrait of the late President, painted by Mr. E. F. Billings, of Worces-

ter, has been placed in the Library, in agreeable and worthy association with the images of the eminent and venerable men that adorn these walls. This portrait is satisfactory to the Council; and it has been commended for its execution and faithful resemblance by those who have seen it. In justice to the artist, and as a proof of his skill, it should be mentioned, that he never saw Governor Davis on more than one occasion, and he was obliged to rely on Daguerreotypes and other likeness not entirely successful.

The informal meetings of the Society "for literary purposes" have not been held during the past summer; but it is expected that they will be resumed in the greater leisure of the ensuing season, when pains will be taken to give a larger number the opportunity of attending. It is known that many members have made investigations in their private studies, the result of which they may be induced to communicate in this manner. As the papers read at the two last of these meetings were deemed very valuable by those members who heard them, and it is proper that the Society at large should be made acquainted with the treasures it possesses, a brief description of these papers will be given. The first in order of time, read by Rev. Mr. Hale, of Worcester, contained reminiscences of the action of the statesmen of our country in relation to the Missouri Compromise. This was listened to with gratified attention; but, as it was made up of fragments of a larger work prepared for another pur-

pose, it was not in proper form for publication by this Society.

Samuel F. Haven, Esq., the Librarian, offered the second paper, in which he investigated the earliest date of the plans and descriptions of the mounds in the south-western part of our country, particularly in reference to Captain Jonathan Heart's rude sketch made in 1786, and published in the "Columbian Magazine" of 1787, and the more elaborate plan presented by Governor Winthrop Sargent to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1787, and published in 1853 in the transactions of that Society.

The third paper was contributed by Samuel Jennison, Esq. It was an animated sketch of the life of Captain Thomas Coram, a native of England, who resided many years in Taunton, Mass. His influence and benevolence were illustrated in this country by his connection with many important enterprises. He returned to London, and in that city established the Foundling Hospital, and engaged in other works of kindness until the year 1740, when he died. This biographical notice was induced by an imperfect and incorrect account of Captain Coram recently published in a popular English periodical. In accordance with a vote of the members present at the reading, the papers of Mr. Haven and Mr. Jennison are preserved on the files, for the disposition of the Society.

The condition of the finances will be seen in the Report of the Treasurer, Samuel Jennison, Esq., which

is herewith transmitted. Dr. Thomas, the founder of the Society, out of his liberal endowment, directed that seventeen thousand dollars should be permanently invested, of which the income was to be appropriated, in part, for the salary of the Librarian, "for explorations and descriptions of the ancient fortifications, mounds, &c., in the Western States and other parts of America;" for the purchase of "antiquities and books;" and "for other necessary purposes of the Society." Since the last semi-annual, and under authority of a special meeting, called for that purpose, the lot of land in Summer Street, Worcester, on which the old Hall of the Society stands, has been sold, and the proceeds of the sale have restored to the treasury the money temporarily withdrawn to pay for the new Hall. This is now finished, and the cost of its construction is paid; but a large expenditure will soon be required for bank-walls and fences around the land of the Society. This work has been delayed, that it may be done with proper conformity to the situation of the ground, when the adjacent court-house shall be removed back from its present awkward position, to complete instead of disfiguring the beautiful and appropriate arrangement of the court buildings adopted by the County Commissioners. The funds of the Society now amount to \$28,124.95. As the necessary current expenses are estimated at \$1300 per annum, it will be seen that the income can furnish but a moderate sum to be



devoted to important incidental objects ; such as the publication of valuable original papers, the purchase of books, which is often required to give completeness to what is possessed, and the binding of books, which is an occasion for constant expense in such a library, and will demand a large appropriation for the contents of the lower hall.

In the earlier years of the Society, the members paid an annual assessment in aid of the funds. This was discontinued with the assent of the founder, who, with sagacity equal to his generosity, by establishing a fund then deemed adequate and ample, gave self-sustaining strength to the Society. Since the formation of this Society, and probably influenced by its example, kindred associations have been organized, in different parts of our country, without other support than the voluntary periodical and occasional contributions of members. These associations have been active and very useful ; but their prosperity, and even their existence, will depend on the capacity and fidelity of the members. The favor with which this Society has been regarded by those who have placed under its care many very precious printed books, manuscripts, and other objects, may be imputed, in some degree, to the confidence in its permanence arising from the certain provision for its support. This provision has been reduced from sufficiency to scantiness, by the increase of expenses which unavoidably attends the growth of the Society. While the enlargement of the funds has

thus become important, the members will not fail to call to mind that they, not less than the strangers who are permitted to use the Library, have received a privilege from the bounty of others, for which they are required to make no pecuniary compensation.

Respectfully submitted,

For the Council,

STEPHEN SALISBURY.

## Report of the Treasurer.

### THE TREASURER OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY REPORTS AS FOLLOWS:—

That the Balance of Funds in his hands, as by his Report of April last,		
was . . . . .		\$19,011.20
Since which time he has received —		
For Notes collected . . . . .		1,600.00
For Interest and Dividends on Bank Stock . . . . .		803.63
	Making . . . . .	21,414.83
For Real Estate on Summer Street . . . . .		9,000.00
		<u>30,414.83</u>
In the same time he has paid —		
For Taxes on Summer-street Estate . . . . .		63.92
For Incidental Expenses, as per Bills presented by the		
Librarian . . . . .		82.21
Insurance . . . . .		18.75
For Librarian's Salary, six months . . . . .		425.00
		<u>589.88</u>
And for twelve shares Shawmut Bank Stock . . . . .		1,200.00
For five shares North Bank Stock . . . . .		500.00
		<u>2,289.88</u>
Leaving the present amount of Funds . . . . .		<u>28,124.95</u>
Which is invested as follows: —		
On account of the Fund of 12,000 Dollars: —		
In Notes with Mortgage . . . . .		10,700.00
Blackstone Bank Stock . . . . .		500.00
Citizens' Bank Stock . . . . .		1,100.00
Fitchburg Bank Stock . . . . .		600.00
North Bank (Boston) . . . . .		500.00
Cash . . . . .		115.31
		<u>13,515.31</u>
On account of the Fund of 5,000 Dollars: —		
In Notes with Mortgage . . . . .		3,165.00
Note of Trustees of Worcester Academy . . . . .		4,000.00
In Stock of the Worcester Bank . . . . .		1,400.00
In Stock of the Citizens' Bank . . . . .		400.00
In Stock of the Quinsigamond Bank . . . . .		1,600.00
In Stock of the Oxford Bank . . . . .		400.00
In Stock of the Shawmut Bank . . . . .		3,700.00
		<u>14,665.00</u>
Less Balance due the Treasurer . . . . .		55.36
		<u>14,609.64</u>
Fund of 12,000 Dollars . . . . .		13,515.31
Fund of 5,000 Dollars . . . . .		14,609.64
		<u>\$28,124.95</u>

SAMUEL JENNISON, *Treasurer.*

OCTOBER 14, 1854.

## REPORT OF THE LIBRARIAN.

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It appears, by the list of accessions since the meeting of the Society on the 26th of April last, that there have been added to the Library two hundred and twenty-two volumes of books, and twelve hundred and thirteen pamphlets.

This increase, respectable in point of numbers, is also of a character highly pertinent to the purposes of the Society, as well as of considerable pecuniary value.

A collection of pamphlets, from the library of our late President, Governor Davis, contains a large amount of exceedingly useful political and statistical matter, which his official positions and private tastes had led him to accumulate.

Fifty-three tracts, of the last century, selected by Hon. Francis Brinley, of Boston, from among some family papers, constitute an acceptable token of interest in the preservation of such documents.

The donation of a box of literary and business publications, from the printing-office of Messrs. E. & J.

F. D. Garfield, of Fitchburg, is deserving of special acknowledgment.

Editors and printers have it in their power to render essential service to the cause of history, by saving from destruction not only documents of apparent consequence, but the more trivial records of the habits, customs, and pursuits, of their time, which come to their possession in the ordinary course of business. In this age of hurried progress and rapid transitions, the security of historical evidence is often left to the uncertain care of a periodical press not assuming, and, in fact, unconscious of, such responsibility; and the waste-box of a printing-office may contain the sole memorials of important transactions. How curious and valuable a collection an editor or publisher, of a half or quarter of a century's standing, might transmit, should he lay aside in their order all the exponents of the varying phases of political strife, and of the daily labors and amusements of society, that fall in his way! Whoever is sufficiently thoughtful to preserve those footprints of passing occurrences which are apt to be lightly regarded until they are lost, and which, at every tide in the affairs of men, are swept into oblivion, may be sure of the gratitude of posterity. Our knowledge of industrial arts and the customs of domestic and social life, in periods no more remote than the middle ages, is not derived from dignified documents or elaborate literature, but is gathered from verbal and pictorial representations of the

humblest pretensions, or picked out of pieces of tapestry, or the ornaments of illuminated manuscripts, otherwise of little value. A small book, entitled "The Shyp of Folys of the Worlde. Inprentyd by Richarde Pynson, to his coste and charge," in 1509, will command a higher price at this day than the profoundest works of his time, partly for its rarity, but mainly on account of the curious exhibitions of familiar manners and popular customs it presents.

In this, one of the characters intended to be satirized is made to say, —

"Still am I busy bookes assembling ;  
 For to have plentie it is a pleasaunt thing, —  
 In my conceyt, to have them ay in hand ;  
 Tho' what they meane do I not understande.  
 But yet I have them, in great reverence  
 And honour, saving them from filth and ordure  
 By often brusshing and much diligence :  
 Full goodly bound in pleasaunt coverture  
 Of damas, sattin, or els of velvet pure,  
 I keepe them sure, fearing least they should be lost ;  
 For in them is the cunning wherein I me boast."

A commendable "folly" certainly; and we should not be sorry if it had extended to the preservation of books that were hardly thought worthy of being "goodly bound in damask or satin." If books are the windows of the past, we like to look not only through the great ones into churches and the halls of learning and the palaces of kings, but through smaller ones into wayside inns and market-places, and even into the kitchens and nurseries of private dwellings. What

is called *temporary* literature, if it survives the limit of its usually transient existence, becomes *contemporary history*; and the conservators of trifles are often the real annalists of their age.

These remarks are not inserted for their novelty or their importance, — although the idea is an important one, — but as the simplest mode of expressing an appreciation of a kind of contributions which printers and publishers can easily make to an institution like this, and might oftener do so if such were known to be acceptable.

Another box of books has arrived from Mr. Stevens, of London, who, it will be remembered, had been employed by Hon. Stephen Salisbury to collect a certain class of works, at his expense, for this Library. This instalment (the third that has been received) comprises forty-seven volumes. Among them are Wood's *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, four volumes, large quarto; and the Catalogue of the Bodleian Library, in five folio and three quarto volumes, embracing the recently published catalogues of manuscripts. The residue are chiefly county histories and topographical and genealogical works, folios and quartos, elegantly bound, and of great intrinsic value. One of them is a lithographed fac-simile of the manuscript of the author, and, doubtless, an expensive curiosity.

There is, however, a disappointment in respect to a portion of these books, inasmuch as they are not precisely such as had been ordered and expected, however

desirable they may otherwise be deemed. It was the desire of Mr. Salisbury to procure a comprehensive series of historical and genealogical works relating to those particular counties from whence the first settlers of New England more immediately came,—a specific purpose, the appropriateness of which, considering their destination, would seem to be manifest. The founders of New England, and not the inhabitants of Old England, as such, were the objects of interest; and it was with reference to the former that the order was mainly given. But, for some unexplained reason, many of the works especially pointed out have been omitted, and others of less comparative consequence have been substituted for them.

The Librarian has purchased Rushworth's Historical Collections, in eight volumes, folio; being moved thereto, in part by frequent occasions of reference to their contents, and partly by the proposition of F. W. Paine, Esq., to contribute a portion of the cost. Mr. Paine has also presented a work much needed in our library,—the "*Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*," in fourteen volumes, containing the reports of Catholic missionaries to their Superiors. Those devoted religionists, it is well known, were the earliest observers of native manners and customs on this continent; and these letters, and the now extremely rare "*Relations*," \* of similar import, are among the most relia-

\* "*Relations de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable aux Missions des Pères de la Compagnie de Jésus en la Nouvelle France.*" They commence in 1611, and extend, with some intervals, to 1672.



ble sources of information respecting the interior of the country in its primitive condition.

A copy of the quarto illustrated edition of Cooke's *Voyage around the World in the years 1772-75*, with the large folio volume of maps and plates, has been transferred to the Society, for a consideration little more than nominal, by Rev. George Allen, who has made the donation of a beautiful copy of Gerhard's *Herbal*, a folio of nearly seventeen hundred pages, printed in 1633.

From Hon. Oliver B. Morris, of Springfield, and his son, Henry Morris, Esq., have been received a copy of "*Dalton's Countrey Justice*," printed in 1655; and two manuscript volumes, containing notes of cases and proceedings in the courts held at Springfield and Northampton, from 1677 to 1697. These are of great interest, exhibiting the operations of a somewhat primitive jurisprudence, and containing valuable materials for local and genealogical history. They came into the possession of Judge Morris with other papers of the Pyncheon Family, so long prominent and influential in that region.

The Massachusetts Historical Society have transferred to this Institution a volume of the Resolves of the General Assembly of Massachusetts in 1777 and 1778. A portion of these resolves was made up in manuscript by Ellis Ames, Esq., who presented the volume to that Society a year or two since; and as they have now procured another copy, and no perfect

one existed in this Library, the transfer was made at his suggestion. The fact has been adverted to, in previous reports, that the government itself possesses no entire series of the laws and legislative journals of Massachusetts, and that they were not known to be complete in any one collection. These notices, it is believed, have had some agency in awakening attention to the subject. The Historical Society has recently taken steps for procuring such as are wanting in that Institution; and, in return for the volume presented to us, it is believed that our duplicates will furnish an exchange at least equally valuable to them.

It has always been a part of the general design of this Society, as a collector of the sources of historical information for the whole country, to obtain from the several States, and from Congress, copies of all documents issued under legislative authority. Applications, made at an early period, were answered by the passage of resolves in Congress, and by the Massachusetts Legislature, providing for the annual transmission of such publications, and by donations from several States of documents then on hand. A disposition to favor a purpose of such common and national utility may be presumed to exist in all cases; but, in the pressure of public business, positive and continued personal influences are required to secure attention to such claims; while, in the change of officers having the control of the distribution of documents, even a statutory direction may be forgotten.

Perhaps the end might be attained, if, instead of printed circulars addressed to the Governors of States (which have not proved effectual), means were found to engage the attention of individual members of the several legislatures, or gentlemen of influence residing near the seats of government.

We continue to receive the Senate and Assembly documents of the State of New York ; but they are the private donation of the Rev. Dr. Sprague, of Albany, whose active exertions for the Society there is constant occasion to notice. Other valuable publications are regularly received from officers in different departments of public service in that State. From no other State, our own not excepted, are such favors obtained with so great regularity. Both at Boston and Washington, the right of the Society to receive the publications of government seems to be construed with unnecessary strictness, and is apt to be limited to those things which come within the definition of ordinary legislative proceedings.

Through special and persevering exertions, many hundred pages of Colonial and Provincial Laws and Journals, that were wanting in our series, have been obtained. Some rare volumes of early laws, that would be duplicates here, have also been met with, which it is desirable to secure from the chances of destruction. The laws that were printed in volumes at intervals, as revised by order of the General Court, are comparatively easy to be procured. Those that

were passed at sessions between the periods of these revised editions, are what have disappeared so generally. They were issued in sheets at the end of each session; and many of them being repealed, or expiring by limitation, before another revised volume was printed, have never appeared in any other form. But few people were careful enough even to secure them in covers; and their perilous condition, exposed to all the hazards of waste-paper, warns us that the rescue of such as remain cannot, with prudence, be long deferred. It is hoped that we may ultimately be able to say that here at least is preserved the entire body of the printed Acts, Resolves, and Journals of Massachusetts, as a Colony, a Province, and a Commonwealth.

Although the sphere of this Society is a national one, it must naturally take a deep interest in all that relates to Massachusetts. Nor can this be deemed a local interest. The origin of this State, its early policy, its acts and principles, are not to be associated, in a limiting sense, with topographical boundaries. Moreover, its laws have extended over New Hampshire; they were copied verbatim by Connecticut; until a comparatively recent date, they governed Maine; and may be considered as belonging to New England.

It happens, too, that members of this Institution have been, and are, intimately connected with the public affairs of Massachusetts in its highest execu-

tive and judicial stations, and were members of the Society before they occupied those posts of honor and responsibility. One, who now fills the Executive chair of the Commonwealth, many years since employed the scanty leisure of a busy professional life in bringing together the widely-scattered materials of its judicial history ; a labor whose difficulty can be appreciated only by those who know the fragmentary and imperfect sources from whence the facts were collected. Another, now deceased, compiled the history of its Revolutionary Congresses. It is a necessity of the local position of this Society, as well as of the historical position and character of the State, that Massachusetts should receive a prominent share of attention.

It is not to be forgotten, however, that there are new and distant States, the beginning of whose political existence, and the remains of whose ancient condition, claim the interest and investigation of this body as a national Institution. It may be gratifying to know that one of our townsmen, brought up in its shadow and under its immediate influences, is favorably situated in California to indulge the decided taste he possesses for a study of its antiquities, and to chronicle the incidents of its progress. In Oregon, too, it is hoped that careful observations will be made in your behalf ; as an officer of the army, lately appointed to a command involving the probability of a residence of several years in that region, has expressed

his desire and intention to record and communicate the archæological and ethnological facts that come to his knowledge. As to Nebraska and Kansas, a historical and descriptive account of them, recently prepared by a member of the Society, at this moment lies upon your table.

In the words of an American poet, as often quoted, perhaps, as are any from the celebrated tragedy to which, as part of an epilogue, they are attached, it may be said that —

“No pent-up *Utica* contracts your powers,  
But the whole boundless continent is yours.”

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